

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 545
By Henry

A RESOLUTION to honor Tennessee's Pearl Harbor Veterans, living and deceased, in observance of the sixtieth remembrance of the Japanese attack on the United States.

WHEREAS, TORA! TORA! TORA! ("TIGER, TIGER, TIGER"), the chilling victory cry and code of the Japanese Commander, Fuchida, signifying maximum strategic surprise as his squadron swept down on the U.S. Pacific Fleet anchored in Pearl Harbor, will live in our hearts and minds forever; and

WHEREAS, on a beautiful Sunday morning at 0755 on 7 December 1941, a force of 183 Japanese planes flew from six aircraft carriers at sea 220 miles north of Oahu and unleashed a dastardly attack on 100 U.S. ships and hundreds of aircraft that were grouped together in Pearl Harbor; a second wave of 168 planes was launched as Pearl Harbor's defenses were destroyed; and

WHEREAS, Japanese planes initially attacked Ford Island and the airfields of Kaneohe, Hickam, Bellows, Wheeler, and Ewa; "Kate" torpedo bombers targeted the U.S. ships helplessly

moored in Pearl Harbor, including eight battleships and more than one hundred heavy and light cruisers, destroyers, and auxiliary craft; and

WHEREAS, along Battleship Row, the *USS California*, *USS Maryland*, *USS Oklahoma*, *USS Tennessee*, *USS West Virginia*, *USS Arizona*, *USS Nevada* and the dry-docked *USS Pennsylvania* felt the sting of the Japanese torpedoes, specifically designed for the shallow waters of Pearl Harbor; and

WHEREAS, the *USS Oklahoma* capsized, while forward magazines on the *USS Arizona* suddenly ignited in a tremendous explosion which sunk the battleship in 9 minutes, taking 1,177 sailors with her, including more than 30 sets of brothers and 3 families, each of whom lost all three sons who served aboard the ship; while the ship's company watched first in horror, then in anger, as Japanese planes relentlessly pressed on with their attack; and

WHEREAS, reeling from their initial shock, members of the U.S. Army, Army Air Corps, U.S. Marines, and the Naval Fleet responded valiantly to the Japanese attack, firing machine guns, rifles, even pistols at enemy planes, passing dangerously hot ammunition and equipment by hand. In their heroic efforts to stave-off the aggressors, 29 Japanese planes were shot down in the counteroffensive; and

WHEREAS, men on fire leaped into the water, swimming to aid their besieged brothers under fierce attack, diving under the flaming, smoldering oil, which either engulfed the men in flames or suffocated them as the smoking oil drew oxygen from the air; and

WHEREAS, the December 7th attack claimed the lives of 2,343 officers and enlisted men, left 1,272 wounded, 1,000 others missing in action and 129 Japanese dead; and

WHEREAS, this villainous act of treachery and deception during America's good faith negotiations with the Japanese to remove the embargo on oil to Japan led to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Declaration of War against Imperial Japan the following day with the statement, "Japan's unprovoked and dastardly attack on the United States Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbor is a date that will live in infamy"; and

WHEREAS, America's resilience and resolve to fight back is best illustrated by the fact that the U.S. Pacific Fleet was rebuilt in 6 months, and at war's end every Japanese ship which participated in the assault had been destroyed; and

WHEREAS, the United States ultimately emerged victorious over Japan; with the Japanese announcement to surrender on 14 August 1945; President Harry S. Truman declared "V-J Day" on 2 September 1945 as the Japanese Military officers surrendered aboard the *USS Missouri* in Tokyo Bay; and

WHEREAS, "Remember Pearl Harbor" had become the rallying cry of our formerly divided isolationist country; the events of 7 December 1941 catapulted the United States into World War II, the single most significant event of the 20th Century, which reshaped the boundaries of the world as we know them today and witnessed the emergence of the United States as the dominant superpower and leader of the free world; and

WHEREAS, the generation of those who served and died at Pearl Harbor, justifiably termed the greatest generation of the 20th Century, have left behind an unparalleled legacy of courage, commitment to duty and country, selfless sacrifice and perseverance; and

WHEREAS, this spirit resonates more strongly than ever today as America confronts a new enemy who targets innocent civilians with unconventional means of terrorist warfare and whose sworn ultimate goal is to destroy democracy and the fundamental fabric of democracies throughout the world; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we honor with reverence and awe those Pearl Harbor survivors, both living and deceased, who forfeited their liberty and lives, so that America may continue to experience the freedoms they so valiantly defended, and further proclaim that we observe 7 December 2001 as the sixtieth remembrance of the Japanese attack on our great nation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That appropriate copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Tennessee War Museum in Nashville for permanent display in the Pearl Harbor Exhibition and to Pearl Harbor survivors at the forthcoming meeting of the Pearl Harbor Survivors' Association, with this final resolving clause deleted from such copy.